

REAL ESTATE GOSSIP

Increase in the Number of Large Residences.

LARGE INVESTMENTS MADE

Influence of the Public on the Character of Building.

SOME RECENT TRANSACTIONS

Ample Provision for Servants One of the Features of Modern City Dwellings.

The sale of the residence of Mrs. Elizabeth Tuckerman at the southwest corner of 16th and I streets northwest has attracted more attention than is usually given to such a transaction, for the reason that the consideration was greater than is common in the sale of residence property. The price mentioned is \$250,000. The inference should not be drawn from the above statement that there are no residences in this city of such a value. It is merely to be understood that it is not usual for such a sum of money to be paid for a residence here.

There are a number of houses which have cost the owners a sum equal to the one mentioned, and a good deal more, but such expenditures have been made by those who have the money and they have not taken the results of the money outlay of some one else. At the present time it is said of one of the latest additions to the list of large private houses in this city that the owner is willing to part with it at the price of \$1,000,000. The house and ground alone, it is estimated, cost at least \$750,000.

Some Large Figures.

This is not the only private residence in this city that properly belongs in such a class, although there is no other about which such large figures as to cost can be used with reason. Still there are quite a number on which the owners have spent in the neighborhood of \$500,000. In some cases the cost has been increased, owing to the character of the construction. The use of steel in building of this class is not unknown and also terra cotta flooring and other devices which are supposed to be only in buildings that are designed to be fireproof.

In some of the best examples of such houses, all the money has not been spent in mere show and ornamentation, but a good part has gone in substantial construction. In this particular some of these houses compare favorably with the best of business buildings.

Sale of a Residence.

J. V. N. and T. B. Huyck, real estate brokers, have sold to Mr. Gardiner Sherman of New York and Bar Harbor the residence of Mrs. Cushing, widow of Dr. Clinton Cushing, 1907 I street northwest. The house, which adjoins the home of the Misses Riggs, is of an individual style, the interior being especially attractive and spacious. The lot has a frontage of over forty-seven feet by an average depth of over 100 feet, abutting a wide alley and containing about 4,500 square feet. It is the intention of the new owner to make extensive alterations, for which plans are being prepared, and upon completion the improvements Mr. and Mrs. Sherman will make their permanent winter residence in Washington. The price paid for the property was \$250,000.

As to Fire Waste.

Some recent statistics have brought out the rather startling fact that the loss from fire in this country is greater than in most of the European countries. The large sum of money that goes up each year in smoke and flame is impressive just because of its proportions, and when the real significance of the waste of these thousands of dollars is considered it can be conceived that the subject is well worthy of the careful attention of all classes of citizens who have to do with property.

Of course, in the case of individual loss it is said the insurance policy covers it, and that is true, but at the same time it must be taken into account that the cost of insurance, and if the percentage of loss were reduced there would be a corresponding falling off in the insurance rates.

Power of the Property Holder.

It is evident that the fire loss, as well as the insurance rates, are largely within the power of the property holder to regulate; in other words, if the character of buildings is improved so that the danger of fire is safely, that is, at once affect the entire situation in both the particulars mentioned. It is a well-known circumstance, and one that is recognized by the very provisions of the insurance policy, that the proximity to a poorly built structure increases the insurance rate on the adjoining buildings.

The principal reason for the standards set in here, for unless there is co-operation in the use of better buildings then it is impossible to accomplish what is desired. This is not much to be effected in the way of reducing insurance charges by one man putting up a good building as long as his neighbor disregards all the rules of construction.

The owner of the well-built building probably secures somewhat lower rates, but nothing in proportion to what his building warrants and what he would receive if the adjoining structures were erected with greater care. In this regard, therefore, it will be seen that the advancement of the character of the building in a city depends somewhat on the general acquiescence of the citizens.

A Saving of Money.

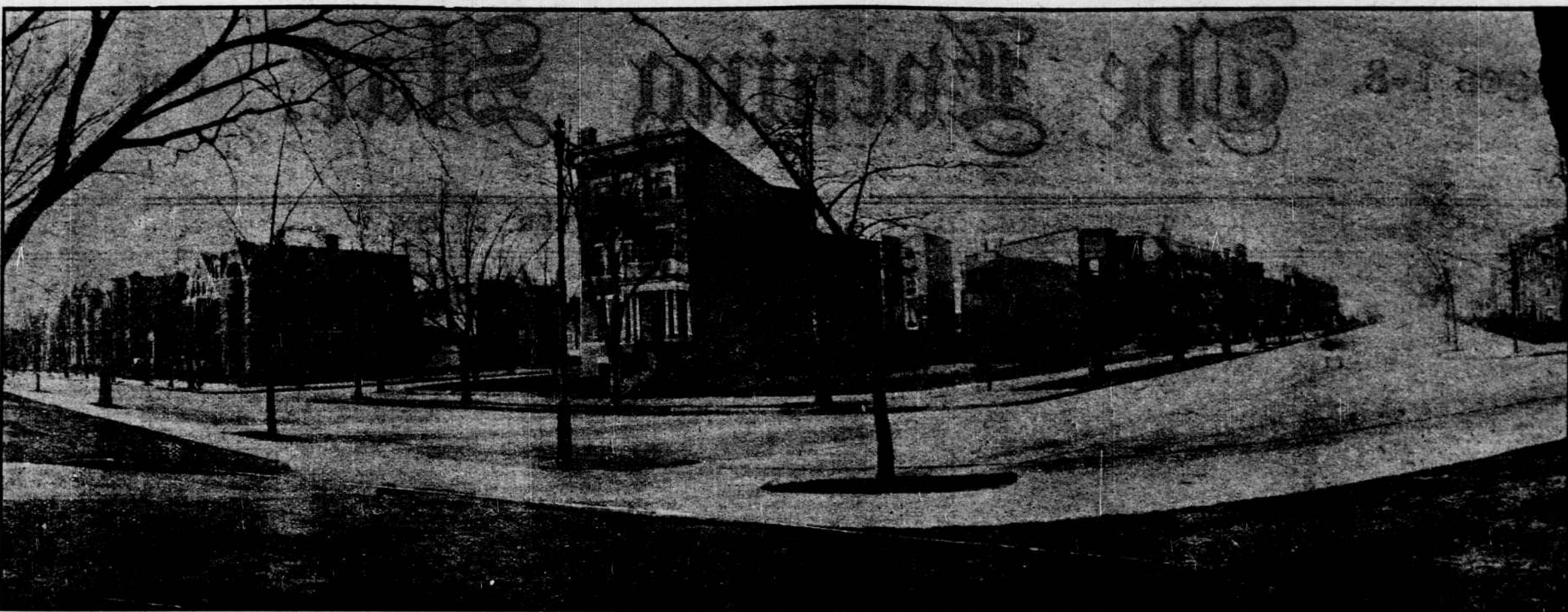
Substantial building is more expensive than flimsy construction, and for that reason, if for no other, any advancement of change from the latter to the former would seem just now rather ill-timed, as the expense of building is already looked upon as reaching a stage where it is regarded as almost prohibitory by some on account of the additional cost arising from the advance in wages and in the prices of materials. Nevertheless, from another point of view such a change would be in line with household economy, entirely independent of insurance cost, which in the case of houses in this city is about as low as it ever will be.

If the walls of a house were well built and tight and due attention were paid to the fitting of window frames and doors there would result an annual saving in fuel which would reach considerable proportions in the course of years. Here lies an important argument for good building. Such houses are more comfortable and it costs less to live in them. The latter is a circumstance that is not given due consideration by those who build not by those who buy.

What is on the Surface.

It is a question whether such a consideration would outweigh in the minds of the average house buyer such details as the merely ornamental features of the modern house, which have such allurements for the housekeeper. Certainly a tiled bath room and tiled vestibule and plate glass storm doors and stone in the front of the house cabinet materials and the details now familiar to the modern buyer, even to one of moderate means, are more apparent than are well-constructed walls, strong floor joists, well-seasoned wood in the partitions and carefully finished openings and roof.

It is quite settled that all of these things are possible in the house which the pocket-book of the ordinary citizen would justify him in buying, and the question is if the buyer of today were given a chance to choose between the two kinds of houses which one would be selected. It might be concluded from the kind of house that is often found in the real estate market that an example of good building would be rejected



EAST CAPITOL STREET AND TENNESSEE AVENUE NORTHEAST.

in favor of the other kind. It does not follow that if a house is well built it must necessarily be without all the attractive features mentioned above, but it goes without saying that such things cannot be in the same profusion as might be possible if the money that is spent in that direction is saved by using inferior material and poor workmanship.

What the Public Wants.

A house that presents the appearance of having cost \$50,000 cannot be built for five thousand or six thousand dollars, and all the materials and workmanship honestly called for in the former house used in the latter. The only known method by which such an appearance can be maintained is by cheapening the construction and in spending the money in whole or in part that is thus saved by putting in those things which appeal to the eye and make a house look stylish.

A well-built dwelling that may not look to the average person unfamiliar with building as having been carefully constructed and the invested money honestly used would be a good deal more attractive to a seller, especially when it is brought in contrast with a house of the opposite kind. This is probably the position of the average builder, who is not averse to a more natural and forcible, that is, in the business, to "do business," and his aim is to supply the market. If people want well-built houses or houses that have more money spent in the construction than is now possible, when so many other things are demanded by the popular taste, he is perfectly willing to furnish houses of that class, for after all he is in the market to find customers.

Responsibility of the Buyer.

In other words, an improvement in the kind of house that is built seems to be up to the public. The people will get what they want, at least to a large extent. The speculative builder has a good deal to answer for, but it is hardly fair to hold him responsible for everything that is done in the effort to supply the demand for houses.

The man who buys has some degree of responsibility for the character of the house which the other man has built, for it is the standard which he sets as a part of the buying public has set that determines the course of the builder.

The Moore Residence.

A feature of the residence which is being built on the south side of Massachusetts avenue between 17th and 18th streets northwest for Mr. Clarence Moore is the ample provision that is being made for servants. The entire upper story has been arranged for that purpose, and as it contains thirteen rooms and two bath rooms, this part of the establishment, which is on a rather elaborate scale, is in proportion to the rest of the house.

Owing to the large building site which is available, it has been possible to give the house a rather unusual width for a city house, and at the same time allow for space on both sides. In this way the house will stand entirely detached, and for that reason a great depth of 100 feet is possible. The main entrance will be in the center of the front and on a level with the street, so that there will be space for rooms on both sides before the approach to the staircase is reached. On one side of the front door will be a large den and on the other a billiard room with a smoking room opening out from it. On the other side of the hall and back of the den will be a cloak room. The rear portion of this floor will be taken up with the kitchen and the servants' hall, while the heating apparatus will be in the basement.

Some Large Rooms.

The principal or second floor will have as its principal room the library, which will extend entirely across the front of the house, and will be the largest single room. Opening from this will be on one side of the hall a music room and on the other a reception room, while at the end of the hall will be the dining room, which will be the second room in the house in point of size.

The second floor will be divided up into five sleeping apartments, three of which will have dressing rooms and bath rooms. The principal bedroom will be on this floor. On the next floor, which will be the fourth, will be the apartments and nursery for the children, with four bath rooms, and on the upper, or fifth, floor will be the rooms for the servants.

There will be a passenger elevator in the house, which will be used in the construction of the exterior.

SALE OF LOTS.

Houses to Be Built by the Purchasers.

The following lots have been sold in the Connecticut Avenue Heights Subdivision by J. B. Wimer, real estate broker: Lot No. 2, south side of Bancroft just west of Connecticut avenue, to John J. Hemphill, for Mr. James G. Hill; lot No. 27, south side of Bancroft place west of Connecticut avenue, for D. C. Wharton Smith; to Mr. Walter O. Blackwood; lot No. 23, south side of Bancroft, for F. G. Newlands, through Thos. J. Fisher & Co., Inc.; to Jas. L. Karick; lot No. 24, south side Bancroft, for Mr. F. G. Newlands, through Thos. J. Fisher & Co., Inc.; to Mrs. Elizabeth Edson Elcheberger; lot No. 21, south side Bancroft place, for F. G. Newlands, through Thos. J. Fisher & Co., Inc.; to Mr. W. O. Blackwood; lot No. 20, south side of Bancroft, for D. C. Wharton Smith; to Mr. J. P. Reeside, who is now erecting a home there; lot No. 9, north side S street between Connecticut avenue and Phelps place, for D. C. Wharton Smith; to Mr. W. O. Blackwood. All the lots are twenty feet wide and the average price paid was about \$5,000.

The sales mentioned are of unimproved property, but in the same subdivision and on Lexington place is located the house which Peuchy & Hazen, real estate brokers, recently sold to Mrs. Blair.

It is proposed to begin at once the improvement of some of the lots, and in the coming spring it is expected there will be additional houses built. It is stated that nearly all these transactions have been closed within a comparatively short time, and it is looked upon as an indication of a favorable condition of the market that there has been as much buying of unimproved ground as there is sales show, and within such a small area.



LOOKING WEST ON I STREET FROM 16TH STREET.

rior, which will be in the French style of architecture. Steel beams and terra cotta will be used in the floors and the partitions and the house will be fireproof. The George A. Fuller Company has the contract for the building.

A Theater Building.

On the 1st of February it is expected that the building of the structure which is to be known as the Gaiety Theater, on 9th street between E and F streets, will be begun. It will be on the site of No. 513 and a portion of No. 514 9th street, and will extend through to 8th street. It will have on the latter street a depth of eighty feet. The builder will be the George A. Fuller Company.

Change in Location.

A change in the location of the office of the real estate firm of Terrill & Little has been made. The firm is now occupying the commodious offices at 715 14th street, just north of the Colorado building, where its offices were formerly.

Fourteenth Street Heights.

A change in the management of suburban realty was noted during the past week, when the Fourteenth Street Heights Land Company signed a contract with Mr. Gilbert C. Soltzer, with offices in the Home Life building, transferring to him the exclusive agency to handle the subdivision "Fourteenth Street Heights."

The new management will grade all of the streets and lots in the subdivision and provide water, sewer, gas, electric lights and lay granite sidewalks, all of which will be done without cost to the purchasers of the lots. In addition to such improvements the corporation will erect at an early date a number of residences, which will mark the opening up of the section.

Improvements To Be Made.

The management not only promises, but guarantees that the improvements will be completed as early as possible. The 14th street cars, which have been in operation for several weeks, pass the subdivision and go several squares beyond, to the Brightwood race track.

The houses will be designed after the most modern ideas in suburban architecture, combining all city conveniences. Mr. W. Frank Butts, who has had experience in handling suburban properties, has been appointed manager of the Fourteenth Street Heights property, and has already closed the sale of several lots in the subdivision.

Transfer of First Lot.

The first lot on this square which passed out of the hands of the United States and David Burns, the original proprietors, between whom the lots were allotted, was to Samuel Davidson, himself a proprietor. It was lot 1, square 487, the transfer being made in 1794. On it is now the Norris building at the northwest corner of 5th and F streets. In 1800 Pratt, Francis and others took four other lots in the square. In square 488 W. Penrose Matthews acquired, in 1798, lots 2 and 3 on E street, and Pratt, Francis & Company the five remaining lots in Burns' name. Though having conducted a number of dwellings in the early years of the last century there

was leased to Frank Brooks, who afterward bought the property. Mr. Brooks and his wife conducted a grocery there for many years. Mrs. Hayes, Mrs. Susan Johnson and Absalom Rodbird, a carpenter and builder, were residents of F street.

In 1824 Henry Hay, a popular painter, took the lot, and in 1825 he sold it to the residence occupied by him until the fifties, and George M. Grouard, long the foreman of the Intelligence office, bought nearby, erecting a \$200 house. H. M. Moffatt acquired part of lot 2 on F street, J. Jones property on 5th street, as also lot 11 was acquired by the trustees—Washington and Absalom Rodbird, a carpenter and builder, were residents of F street.

Valuation of Fourteen Cents.

Fourteen cents per foot was the maximum valuation from 1830 to 1840, and newcomers included Basil Magill, on 5th street; A. Rodbird, at 6th and F streets, and Walter Humphreys, on G street. Some of the improvements had been appreciated, Francis Brooks' heirs being charged on \$1,600 improvements on lot 1, 5th and F streets, where Mrs. Brooks was keeping a grocery; H. M. Moffatt, \$900 on lot 2 on F street; G. M. Grouard, \$900, and A. T. F. Bell, \$250 on 6th street, and R. Brown \$700 on 5th street. About 1840 Jacob Seufferle, once a baker, bought lots 3 and 4, and for many years had his bakery house and residence thereon. In that decade there were others than those named, including John P. Stallings, a well-known house and sign painter of his day; William Dalton, a hackman; James McCarty, grocer; John Morgan, boot and shoe maker; Robert Cohen, shoe dealer, who had before lived on G street; Mrs. Cornock, bonnet maker, on F street; A. S. H. White, long of the land office and Interior Department; T. F. Semmes, grocer; Samuel McElwee, printer; De W. Kent, Phil Ennis, Mrs. Baker, W. A. Bradley, Charles Mann, on 6th street; Mrs. George, Mrs. G. Lansdale, F. B. Lord, a maker, who had moved from F street; David C. Reed, a tailor, and John Caton, the carpenter, who had a grocery store on 5th street. On the latter street was located the printer, Michael Caton, who afterward moved to the square north, and others. The Brooks family, at 5th and F streets, was about the best known in the square. Francis Brooks, the father, or his wife, having lived there from the time of about 1820 to the middle of the century, one of the sons, John, following the carpenter's trade, and another, Patrick H., that of a printer.

In square No. 488, by 1830 there had been considerable progress, and notwithstanding the ponds left by the brick-makers, there was a church upon it, a number of dwellings and some large buildings in prospect. Had been the transfers in real estate until 1815 when the Pratt-Francis lots changed hands. Samuel Elliot, Jr., purchased that year the lot at the southeast corner of 6th and F streets, which the year following was acquired by Mr. John Boyle, long chief clerk of the Navy Department, who also bought lot 14, on 5th street, and after other lots, he died in 1830. In 1816 James McCormick acquired lot 2, on E street.

Purchase by Peter Morty.

The next year Peter Morty bought the lot at the corner of E and 5th streets, the site of the Columbia Title Company's office,

DEVELOPED SLOWLY

Two Blocks of Ground Near Judiciary Square.

IN STATE OF NEGLECT

Reference to a Jail Erected in the Year 1803.

SITE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL HOUSE

Names of Owners of Property and Value of Their Holdings—Course of Stream.

In the two squares—Nos. 487 and 488—between E and G, 5th and 6th streets the development was slow in the early part of the last century, and that, too, notwithstanding, especially on and about the latter square, good brick was lying in wait for pick, shovel and mold to prepare it for use in building. Possibly that condition may have led to Pratt, Francis and others, who in other portions of the city had engaged in the development of property, to invest in the section in question, but there is no evidence that any intention to build in the squares mentioned materialized. The squares, however, were developed by the corporation improving the streets and private citizens building homes and stores as rapidly as the government reclaimed the area now known as Judiciary Square. The latter was an eyecore for more than half a century and the view eastward was not an attractive one. It is true that upon it, north of the tool house and watchman's quarters, was the old jail, erected in 1803. Until about 1850 the jail had no wall about it. The ravine through which ran a stream coursing serpentine from about 5th and G streets to 4th and E streets and thence to the Tiber near Indiana avenue and 1st street was attractive only to the idle boys of the day. It remained open until about 1854, when, by means of an appropriation of \$9,000 by Congress, it was hidden from the public gaze. The following year a simple fence was placed around the square and a brick pavement laid, but the interior of the square was in a state of neglect for many years, notwithstanding that about 1840 a new jail was erected within the lines near 4th and G streets and was known by the criminal class as "The Blue Jug." The old jail became the Washington Infirmary, housing many soldier patients in the early part of the war. It was destroyed November 3, 1861, by fire. The corporation, in 1844, by permission of the government, located one of the public schools in the square, on the 6th street side of F street, and there many local citizens were taught by Dr. Tobias Watkins and others. It was a plain two-story structure, with a room in each story. Those who remember it while viewing the structures of the present can scarcely realize that they attended school in so simple a structure.

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is tradition that a house on the corner of F and 5th streets was the scene of revelry when the British were in this city in August, 1814. An old resident of the neighborhood, long a member of the association of Oldest Inhabitants, many years ago stated to the writer that he was a boy of ten years of age when the British invaded Washington; that he saw a number of orderlies take horses there for the officers and a soldier pointed out one officer as Gen. Ross.

In 1803 the ground was valued at 2 cents by the corporation, but in 1807 half a cent was the figure. In 1818 Catherine Hayes bought the east half of lot 2, and in the twenties a \$900 improvement was assessed. William A. Bradley bought three lots—5, 7 and 10—in 1816, and Eliza Lindsey bought lots 5 and 6. In 1820 Mrs. Catherine Hayes bought part of the lot at 6th and G streets. Rev. O. B. Brown bought lot 3, corner 6th and F streets, and part lot 2. In the twenties Mr. Bradley had a \$450 improvement on 6th street. Mrs. Haines one of \$200 at the corner of 6th and G streets, and Mr. Brown had improvements of \$150 and \$250. In 1819 lot 4, at the corner of 5th and F streets, had passed to John Hume, Deedee and Col. Bomford, and shortly thereafter

as also the adjoining lot north, and these in 1818 he sold to John Brannan and by him were sold to Mr. Boyle. The same year Wm. Salter acquired lot 12, about midway of the square in 5th street, and built a home valued at \$1,500. R. Ballard had lot 4, on 6th street north of E street, and Imgle & Lindsey were on the lot the same year. James M. Varnum was the owner of lot 3, at the northeast corner of 6th and E streets, in 1821, but in a few years disposed of it. Ambrose Lynch purchased the corner where he lived many years and carried on the grocery trade, his house, which is yet standing, being assessed at \$1,300. M. Flanagan was next with a \$900 property and Charles Pettitt at the east end of the lot, where he lived many years. The two parts of lot 3, on 6th street, went to John Hume, a carpenter, and W. Douglas, the former being a resident there for a long time. In that decade Aaron Von Cobie, J. S. Clark and Philip and Gregory Ennis acquired 6th street property.

In 1828 the Wesley M. E. Church was organized, principally by members from Freery, and being the Morning Star, the deed for the site, lot 10, at the south-



M STREET NORTHWEST, LOOKING EAST FROM 6TH STREET.

ward corner of F and 5th streets, was taken by the trustees of Foundry—George Cranley, John Connell, Richard Thompson, George Bushby, Jacob Hines and Ulysses Ward. Familiarly known as the chapel and being the scene of a memorable revival in which Rev. J. Newland, D.D., was the leading spirit, resulting in hundreds of conversions and several other such occasions, it was not many years before it became one of the largest churches of that denomination. The original church was one of the conventional chapel buildings of that day. Alongside of it on 5th street, in 1840, part of lot 11 was acquired by the trustees—Washington Lewis, Dr. Thos. Sewall, Enoch Tucker, H. C. Sade, John Scrivener, C. W. Butler and Thomas Haverem, and 12 cents per foot was the value before the ground had appreciated to 12 and 20 cents per foot. Mr. Boyle built his house on the lot at the southeast corner of the square, and one at the northwest corner of the square; and J. S. Clarke, Van Cobie and Philip Ennis, on the lot at the northeast corner of the square. In the fifties the present church building was erected, covering the ground originally acquired, with that conveyed in 1840.

Brick Yard Ponds.

Though the holdings remained to a large extent unimproved for several years prior to about 1830, much of the ground in the form of brick had gone into houses elsewhere, and there were consequently some brickyard ponds in the square. Mr. Boyle was then the largest owner in the square. Van Cobie, a carpenter and builder, had located the square, and from 8 to 12 cents per foot was the value before the ground had appreciated to 12 and 20 cents per foot. Mr. Boyle built his house on the lot at the southeast corner of the square, and one at the northwest corner of the square; and J. S. Clarke, Van Cobie and Philip Ennis, on the lot at the northeast corner of the square. In the fifties the present church building was erected, covering the ground originally acquired, with that conveyed in 1840.

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Brick Yard Ponds.

Though the holdings remained to a large extent unimproved for several years prior to about 1830, much of the ground in the form of brick had gone into houses elsewhere, and there were consequently some brickyard ponds in the square. Mr. Boyle was then the largest owner in the square. Van Cobie, a carpenter and builder, had located the square, and from 8 to 12 cents per foot was the value before the ground had appreciated to 12 and 20 cents per foot. Mr. Boyle built his house on the lot at the southeast corner of the square, and one at the northwest corner of the square; and J. S. Clarke, Van Cobie and Philip Ennis, on the lot at the northeast corner of the square. In the fifties the present church building was erected, covering the ground originally acquired, with that conveyed in 1840.

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Purchase by Peter Morty.

The next year Peter Morty bought the lot at the corner of E and 5th streets, the site of the Columbia Title Company's office,

GOOD PUBLIC ECONOMY

Results of the Plan to Save Public Funds.

LAWN SPACES ON STREET

How They Can Be Made Much More Effective.

CITY AUTHORITIES CAN ASSIST

Lawns Without Grass Are Not